

## State Superintendent's Student Advisory Board Spring 2012



The Student Advisory Board is part of Graduation Matters Montana, an initiative to increase the number of Montana students who graduate from high school through collaborative partnerships with schools, community organizations, businesses and youth.



2011 2012

Superintendent Denise Juneau



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*"Students want to be actively involved in their education. As adults, we should encourage and support their participation."*

*Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Denise Juneau*

## Overview



State Superintendent Denise Juneau's 2011-2012 Student Advisory Board (SAB) convened for their second summit on April 10-11, 2012 in Bozeman, Montana. The board's 40 high school students from 30 schools

met to discuss how to strengthen student voices in schools.

Members of the SAB were nominated by local school and community leaders. The students bring diverse perspectives and experiences to the SAB discussions, and include students who have considered dropping out as well as students who excel in school.

Board members and their chaperones gathered at Montana State University (MSU) in Bozeman. The meeting was convened on a college campus based on remarks from the fall meeting where students expressed they wanted more exposure to college campuses and college life. Students toured the campus and learned about retention and career services while visiting with faculty from the business and engineering departments. During an evening reception, MSU President Dr. Waded Cruzado welcomed the students and chaperones and shared her educational experience and why she believes postsecondary education is critical for success in the 21st century. In addition, advisory board members Ekoo Beck, from Hellgate High School, and Garrett Lankford, from CMR High School, shared what student involvement looks like in their communities.

The second day, the SAB gathered with Superintendent Juneau for a full day of discussion and presentations. Ty Show, a freshman at MSU and member of the 2010-2011 SAB spoke about the inaugural board and how it influenced his first year of college. The students spent their advisory time with Superintendent Juneau discussing what student voice looks like in their school and how they would like to be more involved and be an integral part of





their school's decision-making and policy-making. The SAB was also updated on Graduation Matters activities across the state. They heard from a panel of SAB members who held leadership roles in their schools and who participated in an "I Pledge" role-playing event where student groups presented to business leaders, school officials, Superintendent Juneau and their peers to practice using their voice and being student leaders.

## Providing Opportunities for All Students to Work Alongside Adults and Have a Voice in Their Schools

The SAB members expressed a desire to be engaged as partners with teachers and administrators on a more authentic level when it comes to school policy and decision-making that directly affects them and their classmates. The SAB members want to be encouraged, included and respected in their schools and their communities. "Kids need to know how they can get their voice heard and that adults are actually receptive to it," said Nate a board member from Belgrade.

They were quick to point out that not all students become involved in student councils or school boards and that a diverse group of students could better inform the school and community on what it's like being a student in the 21st century. Members said they often struggled to figure out the best avenues for getting their voices heard or to know the "right way" to share information, even when adults were receptive to their ideas.

Students who had many opportunities to participate in student clubs and extracurricular activities felt very engaged in school. The SAB members agreed that teachers have the greatest influence on whether students are encouraged to get involved, or whether students have the ability to create student clubs or have opportunities for field trips and experiential learning.

## Research

- As students progress through grades they feel less and less like they have a voice in the school. This sentiment is supported by the My Voice Survey which states that in 6th grade 59 percent of students believe they have a voice but in 12th grade that percentage decreases to 33 percent.
- Students are more likely to graduate ready for college and career if they are academically and socially integrated into school life. The Quaglia Institute states "students who feel they have a voice in their schools are much more likely to say they feel engaged and have a sense of belonging in school, regardless of their gender, race/ethnicity, or age."



## The SAB Recommendations

- Treat students as individuals because one student cannot represent all students.
- Inform students of the avenues to use their voice and be an advocate for all students.
- Authentically seek out student opinions and follow through with student recommendations.
- Reward teachers who create opportunities for students to engage in extracurricular activities, field trips and hands-on learning experiences.



## Challenging Students with Rigorous and Relevant Course Work

According to the OCHE, college-ready is defined as “the level of academic preparation necessary to successfully complete entry level college courses that are required for a degree.” In Montana, the 2011 My Voice Survey found that 92 percent of our students are confident and optimistic about their future, but many lack skills to implement strategies needed to reach their dreams. The SAB members wanted their high school experience to feel comparable to college rather than middle school. They seek course work relevant to their lives.



## Student-to-Student Mentoring an Effective Way to Encourage Diverse Student Voice

The SAB members emphasized that they want opportunities to learn from and support their peers. Some students have created cultural clubs and mentoring groups to provide venues for peer-to-peer conversations and support. They recognize the potential for building meaningful relationships with their peers and that they can directly influence a student's attitude, success and participation in school. Some schools involve students in a process of surveying their peers for more information on the most important issues in school. Schools have also surveyed students about what keeps kids in school and what leads them to disengage and drop out. Students feel empowered by being the intermediary voice between their peers and adults.



## Research

- Research from Grad Nation shows that “youth who participate in mentoring relationships demonstrate better school attendance, a greater likelihood of going on to higher education, and better attitudes toward school.”
- The Quaglia Institute found that “increased student voice leads students to feel a greater sense of belonging in school, which in turn leads them to become more engaged.”
- According to Closing the Mentoring Gap “nearly 15 million American young people, many of whom display early indicators of dropping out, are still in need of mentors.”

## The SAB Recommendations

- Ensure student council meetings are open to all students and encourage broader student participation.
- Set up structures or outreach efforts that engage new student voices that are seldom heard.
- Create and/or support student-to-student mentor programs and relationships and peer-to-peer tutoring.

## Student Advisory Board Video

During the summit, Sam Erickson, a freshman at MSU studying film, created a video featuring students on the board. The students explained how participating on Superintendent Juneau’s Student Advisory Board has impacted their lives and allowed them to positively influence their friends. The video can be found on the OPI Graduation Matters website.

## References

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Rodgers, Andrew. “Student Voice: Bridge to Learning.” Diss. University of Washington, 2005. ProQuest. Jan. 2006. Web. 1 June 2012. <<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdlink?did=954008751&Fmt=7&clientId=79356&RQT=309&VName=PQD>>.



# State Superintendent's Student Advisory Board Members 2011-2012

## Returning Members:

Aurora Hurlburt,  
Cody Hill,  
Derek DeShazer,  
Elizabeth Grandchamp,  
Emma,  
Jeanne Breakall,  
John Barlow,  
Kaitlynn Lynch,  
Katherine Hibbs,  
McKenzie Kralich,  
Michael Devlin,  
Michelle Mulligan,  
Nichole Fullbright,  
Sapphire Carter,  
Taylor Spotted Horse,  
Tyus Rock Above,  
Walt Zeimer,

Sunburst High School  
Whitefish Independent High School  
Lincoln County High School  
Glasgow High School  
Bigfork High School  
Twin Bridges High School  
Park High School  
Lincoln Public School  
Roberts High School  
UM-Helena Access to Success  
Polson High School  
Glasgow High School  
Fergus High School  
Rocky Boy High School  
Rocky Boy High School  
Billings Senior High School  
Wibaux County High School

## New Members:

Austin Gabelt,  
Casey Ribaudo,  
Catherine Cybulski,  
Christopher Nelson,  
Cole Krenik,  
Danika Fabich,  
Garrett Lankford,  
Holly Capp,  
Iko'tsimiskimaki (Ekoo) Beck,  
Jess Cunningham,  
Jocelyn Acheson,  
Larry Bratke,  
Mariah Hamel,  
Marielle Gallagher,  
Meg MacLean,  
Natalie McAlpine,  
Nathaniel Field,  
Nicole Ribeiro,  
Reed Lone Fight,  
Ronson LaRoque,  
Ryan Vicek,  
Simon Doney,  
Trevor Watts,

Simms High School  
Cascade High School  
Custer High School  
Lincoln Public School  
Billings West High School  
Anaconda High School  
C.M. Russell High School  
Great Falls High School  
Hellgate High School  
Hysham High School  
Wolf Point High School  
Bozeman High School  
Polson High School  
Hellgate High School  
Hamilton High School  
Valier High School  
Belgrade High School  
Thompson Falls High School  
Bozeman High School  
Plenty Coups High School  
Alberton High School  
Fergus High School  
Custer County High School

